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Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

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Wednesday, 21 January 2009, 10.45 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Lacroix	(France)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Turkey	Mr. Ilkin
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2009/21)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2009/21)

The President (*spoke in French*): I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I propose, with the consent of the Council, to extend an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Choi Young-Jin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire and head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Choi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/21, which contains the nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Choi Young-Jin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire and head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Choi (*spoke in French*): The nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2009/21), which members have before them, is an update on important developments that have occurred in Côte d'Ivoire since his previous report on that subject (S/2008/645), issued on 13 October 2008.

With your permission, Mr. President, I should like to focus my briefing today on the current pressing issues for Côte d'Ivoire: identification of the population, disarmament and the elections. Those three issues will have a direct and decisive impact on Côte d'Ivoire's future and even on a possible exit strategy for UNOCI.

With regard to those three crucial issues, the Secretary-General's report refers to two important events that have taken place over the past three months. The first concerns the decision taken by the Permanent Consultative Framework, which met in Ouagadougou on 10 November 2008, and the second concerns the signing, on 22 December 2008, of the fourth supplementary agreement to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, commonly called "Ouaga IV".

The Framework's major decision in November was to postpone the presidential election initially planned for 30 November 2008 and to announce that the new date could be set according to the progress made in identifying the population. The Framework's decision is both understandable and intriguing. It is understandable in the light of the historic importance of identification for the Ivorian population. The issue of "*Ivoirité*" not only has been one of the major sociopolitical problems over the past two decades, but also lies at the heart of the current Ivorian crisis. A definitive resolution of the issue of national identity, which could be achieved within a few weeks' time, would be a historic and strategic step forward.

The decision by the Permanent Consultative Framework is intriguing because, for the first time since the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement in March 2007, the Ivorian people and the international community have neither a date nor a period for the elections. Without objectives, all momentum will be lost, including for the organization of an electoral plan, its implementation, logistical organization, a financial plan and even assistance provided by the international community.

The Framework's decision mentions the possibility of establishing the new electoral timetable in January 2009. President Laurent Gbagbo has publicly requested the Independent Electoral

Commission to establish an electoral period. Henri Konan Bédié and Alassane Dramane Ouattara also believe that a new electoral timetable must be provided to the Ivorian people and to the international community. Given that unanimous position, I believe that the Commission should provide an electoral timetable with specific stages as soon as possible.

That was the first important event. What was the other? It was the signing of the fourth supplementary agreement on 22 December 2008. The agreement contains two important points: the first concerns the completion of disarmament two months before the presidential election, and the second deals with the restoration of State authority in the North by 28 February 2009, at the latest.

The provision concerning the completion of disarmament before the presidential election is a crucial change with regard to the third supplementary agreement of November 2007, which provided only for arms control — not for their elimination — before the elections. The restoration of State authority in the North, which also includes the judiciary, would then be linked, inter alia, to the settlement of disputes concerning the electoral list.

Thus, the impact of the fourth supplementary agreement on the peace process in general and on the electoral process in particular could be decisive. It is too early to assess the scale of that impact, but it could complicate managing the electoral timetable. I hope to be able to provide a detailed report at the next Security Council meeting on Côte d'Ivoire.

I cannot be silent about the frustration that we all share because of the delays experienced in the holding of the Ivorian elections. However, I should like to suggest that we put things in perspective. For the Ivorian people, the peace process will remain incomplete unless the three issues of identification, elections and disarmament are resolved. The United Nations will be unable to design an exit strategy unless credible elections are held and the effective reunification of the country is achieved on the basis of credible disarmament. In that regard, while there is a danger that it could further complicate the electoral process, the fourth supplementary agreement, by placing disarmament before the elections — and despite the possibility that it may be used as a pretext to delay the elections — could be seen as a mechanism to help resolve those issues.

As to the identification process, I am pleased to bring the Security Council encouraging news. More than 3.5 million people have now been identified throughout the national territory. That figure is particularly noteworthy given the fact that most Ivorians appear to agree that a realistic figure may be much higher than the original 11 million persons originally foreseen. Moreover, the process is almost complete in two of the most important political centres of Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan and Bouaké.

Perhaps more significant is the fact that this historic and strategic progress has been made with no major incidents to date. Only a year ago, who could have imagined such a development in the conduct of the identification process? Millions of Ivorians will very soon receive national identity cards for the very first time in their lives, allowing them to participate freely in economic activities and to circulate freely within their own country and in neighbouring States. It is moving to see people line up outside the identification centres as early as 4 a.m. in order to be identified.

In parallel with the peaceful conduct of the identification process, peace and stability have been largely restored in Côte d'Ivoire, allowing UNOCI to propose reducing its military force by one battalion beginning in March 2009. In principle, the identification operation is to conclude by the coming spring. At that point in time, I will be in a better position to report on the progress made in the other two critical issues of disarmament and elections.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative for his briefing.

I give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation takes the opportunity offered by this meeting of the Security Council on the nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2009/21) to describe, on behalf of the Ivorian Government, recent developments in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Allow me first to thank the Secretary-General for the high quality of his report, which describes the efforts of the Ivorian parties to implement the peace

process launched with the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement.

We also wish to thank the French presidency of the Security Council for this month. On behalf of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, we wish once again to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert and his team for their outstanding leadership of the work of the Council.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has carefully considered the latest report of the Secretary-General, which covers the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and offers criteria for a possible progressive drawdown of ONUCI troops. We welcome the strong signal sent by the United Nations through the Secretary-General's recommendations on reducing the United Nations military presence in Côte d'Ivoire. It reaffirms the significant progress made since the assumption by Ivorians of the process of overcoming the crisis with the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement.

We also wish to thank Ambassador Choi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his objective assessment of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and for his work to restore genuine peace to my country.

This progress was consolidated by the signing, on 22 December 2008, of the fourth supplementary agreement to the Ouagadougou Agreement, which identifies the modalities and timetable for operations to disarm ex-combatants of the Forces nouvelles, disband the militias, relaunch the process of reunifying the Ivorian defence and security forces, and complete the redeployment of public administration throughout the territory, including local authorities, the judiciary and the tax and customs administrations.

I am pleased to announce that the implementation of the fourth supplementary agreement began on Thursday, 15 January, with the celebration by the Ivorian Government of a dual ceremony marking the return of the financial and judicial administrations to the central, northern and western zones of the country that had previously been occupied by the Forces nouvelles.

Regarding the financial administration, I note that, once the current mobilization phase is complete, customs posts will open in Ouangolo, Pogo and Bouaké in less than 10 days, on 2 February. The tax administration, for its part, is now being deployed in the formerly occupied zones.

As to the judicial administration, some 380 members of the judiciary — including judges, registrars and corrections officers — were presented in Bouaké and are to be redeployed in the central, northern and western zones in the framework of the restoration of State authority and the redeployment of the administration throughout the national territory.

The police and the gendarmerie are also being redeployed to support the other administrations. Police commissariats and gendarmerie brigades will be open to receive the 3,400 personnel of the joint brigades, the list of whom is being drawn up by the integrated command centre, which has already been partially funded to undertake the operation.

With regard to the identification of the populace, on 15 January the Government of Côte d'Ivoire disbursed 4.6 billion CFA francs, equivalent to some $10 million, to the Independent Electoral Commission and all the national agencies in charge of the registration process so as to continue and complete the operation under way by 28 February. This disbursement is supplementary to the 2.3 billion CFA francs disbursed by early January for a total of 6.9 billion, equivalent to approximately $14 million, towards the $15 million requested by the Commission to fund the nationwide deployment of 4,000 teams in charge of identification and registration on electoral lists. The next disbursement of 2.7 billion CFA francs — about $5 million — will take place in February. This financial effort on the part of the State of Côte d'Ivoire has been supported by the international community through ONUCI, the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union.

More than 3.5 million individuals have now been identified, accounting for over half of the 6.5 to 7 million persons who will ultimately comprise the electorate. It will be noted that prospects for the electoral process are promising, and by mid-February the Permanent Consultative Framework of the Ouagadougou Agreement will be able to meet and propose to the Independent Electoral Commission dates for the holding of presidential elections, probably in the last quarter of 2009.

Côte d'Ivoire is indeed a stable country, but the prolonged crisis ultimately exhausted the financial resources of the State and is jeopardizing its financial

equilibrium. That is why my Government is requesting assistance in financing activities related, in particular, to the demobilization of former combatants, the restoration of State authority, the redeployment of State administration throughout the country and peacebuilding in general.

Regarding peacebuilding, I take this opportunity to thank the French Government for its ongoing support to Côte d'Ivoire in the relevant bodies, with a view to substantially reducing Côte d'Ivoire's debt; this is necessary for reviving our economy and for post-crisis reconstruction.

I wish in conclusion to draw the Council's attention to a situation that is on the verge of becoming a humanitarian issue: the individual sanctions that remain in force on Mr. Charles Blé Goudé, Mr. Eugène Kouadio Djué and Mr. Martin Fofié Kouakou. The war has ended, and those three individuals are playing a significant role in putting an end to the crisis. My delegation hopes for an end to their ordeal, which has become a tragic one for those individuals, who have been forgotten during the national reconciliation process.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Security Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.